

rugged head far above his fellows, in order to catch the first rays of the sun, when his heathery knolls, and weather-beaten brow, may be viewed in all the gorgeousness of purple and gold in the early morn, while the whole of that rich valley lies veiled and curtained under the sombre and darkling shadow of his gigantic rival, Crossfell;—then again the noble Helvellyn, supported by the towering Scawfell and Bontamond, stretching its lofty summit near a league and a half in one vast concave ridge, with its frightful and yawning gulfs, and giddy precipices, where perished the noble stranger, whose mouldering remains were so long guarded by his faithful dog, a circumstance so pathetically described in one of the earliest and most beautiful poems of the immortal Scott:

"How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
When the wind waved his garments how oft didst thou start?"

How many long days and long nights didst thou number,
Ere he faded before thee, friend of thy heart?"

Black Comb next rears his huge and massy bulk to an altitude

"——— A minstering angel might select;
For from the summit of Black Comb, (tread name,
Derived from clouds and storms,) the amplest range
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands.*

Not far from hence is the famous pyramid of small stones, enough to pave the streets of a city, which slipped out of the corner of Mitchel Scott's apron, when he and the devil were wending their way across the foot of Black Comb with all the materials for building a bridge over a neighbouring mountain stream; where the said bridge may be seen to this day, leaning to one side several inches from its perpendicular, owing to the devil's attempt to push it over, and thus destroy it after it was just finished, in consequence of Mitchel Scott's refusing to give him his promised guerdon for assisting to build it; when the latter, perceiving his evil intention, ran to the other side, clapped his shoulder against it, and thus prevented further damage.

Nor must the noble Skiddaw,† Cumberland's boast and glory, be overlooked, and high indeed would be the stand, a man must take to do so.

This mountain too has got its tale of terror, for, in the dead of winter, there's never a stormy

* Wordsworth.

† This mountain rises much more abruptly than any other in its vicinity, in consequence of which it has always been a disputed point between the Cumbrians and the Westmorians, whether Skiddaw or Crossfell is the highest. The height of the latter has been ascertained to be 4001 feet, but I do not know that the former has ever been measured.

night that the old headless lord, with his six furious blacks, and coachman—all headless too—may not be seen driving headlong down its scours, and disappearing in the lake below.

Not far from this, may still be seen, the Giant's Cave, where lived in days of yore, that cannibal monster which kept that country side in awe.*

Such are the ideas associated with the several mountains in the particular locality to which my tale refers, and every other, I doubt not, has its appropriate legend. They are the very fairy-land of romance—the heaven, if there be one upon earth. Oh, how I love them! the sight of them is, to me, like life from the dead!

CHAPTER I.

The summer sun peeps dim and red
Above the eastern hills.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

HELL-BECK HALL, situated at the foot of Dunfell, as I have already stated, is a large and spacious building, not probably of more ancient origin than the Elizabethan age; although there is a ruin in its vicinity, called the "Old Hall," which, from its round Norman towers and rude architecture, may justly lay claim to a very remote antiquity.

The beautifully variegated and park-like grounds surrounding the buildings, with the lofty "Fells" immediately behind;—the clear crystal Eden, so famous for its trout and salmon, winding round the front;—the high and dark blue chain of rugged mountains opposite, which rise successively behind each other, like the tumultuous billows of the troubled ocean, distant as they are, extending their shadows, in the setting

* There are many popular legends in this neighbourhood about the valorous exploits of the famous Guy of Warwick, firmly believed in to this day by those simple and superstitious inhabitants, none of which are considered of so much importance as his great and successful conflict with this fearful monster, whom he mortally wounded, and left for dead at the mouth of his cave; but he revived and rallied again sufficiently to do penance, at the instigation of a zealous monk, who visited him in his last agony, and admitted him into the bosom of the church, in consequence of which he was buried in consecrated ground, in the neighbouring cemetery of Perith Church, where his grave is still to be seen with two flat stones placed edgeways on each side of it, and with a high pointed pillar, firmly fixed in a socket of solid stone-work, at the head and foot. So much for the legend of the Giant's Grave, which certainly is there, marked out as I have described it, about eight feet long, with the pillars of a corresponding height, and any doubts we may naturally enough entertain as to the origin of these very ancient and extraordinary monuments of antiquity, here assigned, it is a fact no less strange than true, that the most careful and scrutinizing investigation of the antiquarian, has never been able to attribute their existence to one more feasible and probable.